

**Unclassified**

**SG/PCD/M(2012)1**

Organisation de Coopération et de Développement Économiques  
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**27-Mar-2012**

**English text only**

**GENERAL SECRETARIAT**

SG/PCD/M(2012)1  
Unclassified

**MEETING OF THE NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS FOR  
POLICY COHERENCE FOR DEVELOPMENT**

**SUMMARY RECORD**

**9 February 2012**

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**JT03318708**

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## SUMMARY RECORD

### MEETING OF THE NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS FOR POLICY COHERENCE FOR DEVELOPMENT (PCD)

held on 9 February 2012 at the OECD Conference Centre, Paris

#### Session 1: A new development paradigm

1. In response to an evolving global landscape and emerging policy challenges that require whole-of-government approaches to development, members mandated in 2011 the OECD to design an Organisation-wide Strategy on Development. **Angel Gurría**, OECD Secretary-General, emphasised in his opening remarks the importance of policy coherence for development (PCD) as a core element of this new Strategy.

2. Policy coherence for development is crucial in an interconnected and globalised world primarily for two reasons. First, because today more than ever the impacts of policies put in place by any one country are felt far beyond that country's borders. Second, because the rapidly changing global economic landscape has emphasised the need to improve and reinforce policy approaches, mechanisms and tools, so as to better exploit the potential of synergies across different policy areas.

3. To this end, the OECD will foster work on policy coherence for development at four complementary levels:

- *At the OECD*, by assessing and monitoring the impact of the OECD's work on development. This involves mainstreaming the development dimension throughout the Organisation and its Committees, refocusing the analytical work to take into account the impact of specific policies on development outcomes, identifying in particular areas of incoherence and ensuring that our policy advice is coherent and consistent with development objectives.
- *In advanced economies*, by developing evidence-based analyses on the costs of incoherent policies as well as on the benefits of more coherent policies. We want to accompany our members in their efforts to design mutually reinforcing policies for development across a wide range of economic, social and environmental areas.
- *In emerging and developing economies*, by engaging in a process of identifying holistic policy options for their development path, including by fully taking into account the interaction between domestic and international policy frameworks and actions.

- *Globally*, by addressing common challenges, global public goods and “bads”, including climate change, tax evasion, food price volatility, violent conflict, and illicit financial flows to name a few.

4. In a rapidly changing context, PCD is also about designing mutually reinforcing policies through collective international efforts. It is about the need to harness and synergise different policies to support development in a comprehensive manner. This reinforces the need for policy dialogue between OECD and partner countries as a means to enrich the evidence-base that we have created over the past 50 years. To this end, the Strategy has identified four priority areas where the OECD has core competences and can add value to international efforts: (i) innovative and sustainable sources of growth; (ii) mobilisation of resources for development; (iii) governance for development; and (iv) measuring progress for development.

5. The OECD Strategy on Development will be delivered to the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting in May 2012.

6. **Birgit Schnieber-Jastram**, Member of the European Parliament (EP) and Standing Rapporteur for PCD, commended the OECD for raising awareness about PCD and for organising this meeting together with the European Commission.

7. Nationally elected politicians are constantly faced with situations where developing and developed countries’ interests seemingly conflict. But such conflicting interests may be aligned if a long-term perspective is taken and something more akin to a real and sustainable partnership with developing countries is established. This would also lead to development policy being freed from its role as a repair station for other policies that may do harm in the world. Coherent and fair policies would give governments and societies of developing countries the chance and responsibility to generate success on their own.

8. Most challenges and incoherencies are well known, but there is still a lack of political will to introduce change. Research by international organisations such as the OECD, NGOs, and civil society provide politicians with the necessary arguments to push the PCD agenda forward during these times of transition and global tectonic shifts. Old certainties crumble and give way for new insights and fresh ways of looking at things.

9. The biannual report on PCD is currently being prepared for presentation to the European Parliament’s Development Committee.

### **Session 2a: PCD and food security – what are the issues?**

10. The policies put in place by advanced economies can have a critical impact on global food security. **Ken Ash**, OECD Director for Trade and Agriculture, chaired this session, which explored the policy impacts of agriculture, trade and development policies on food security in developing countries, and how these have changed over time.

11. **Jonathan Brooks**, Senior Agricultural Policy Analyst, OECD, identified emerging PCD issues (problems) at stake and discussed how OECD analysis can contribute to addressing incoherencies and their impact on developing countries. In particular, he addressed two main issues:

- How has the old PCD agenda evolved, and which elements of it remain valid?
- What defines the new agenda for PCD and food security?

12. In the past, high levels of support to agriculture required trade policies to keep them in place, such as high tariffs and export subsidies to get rid of surpluses and domestic support that depressed world prices. These policies did more harm than good to developing countries, although there were winners and losers among and within countries.

13. Subsequent reforms were gradual, with total support imposing a declining burden on the economy and support to farmers becoming less coupled with production. The price spike in 2007-08 changed the policy environment further and neutralised OECD countries' price support policies and the need for tariffs and (in the event of surpluses) export subsidies. But the new high prices are associated with new incoherencies, such as export restrictions (which made markets unreliable) and biofuel mandates (which added to price volatility). While these new issues are pressing, they also provide a good opportunity to lock in reforms. It is easier to reduce tariffs when they are already low and it is less painful to abolish export subsidies when they are not being used.

14. The price spike also caused hardship in developing countries, raising questions of whether or not we had been inconsistent in stressing the effects of first low and then high prices. While high prices pose a short-term threat to developing country farmers, they also present them with an opportunity.

15. Structurally higher prices are expected over the coming decade. These are a signal of the deeper challenges that we face in feeding a further two billion people by 2050 and ensuring global food security. The target of global food security is associated with supply side challenges (ensuring that enough food is available) and demand side challenges (that people have access to affordable food). This defines the new "positive" agenda for PCD.

16. On the availability side, the main question concerns how increased production can be reconciled with other objectives and constraints, such as climate change and water resource use. On the demand side, there is a need to raise incomes and reduce poverty. To this end, an economy-wide perspective that promotes an enabling environment (smallholder development, social protection and risk management) is much more important than agricultural policies *per se*. Finally, we must recognise that these issues go far beyond the OECD's membership and that in particular BRIICS are key players on both sides.

17. **Julia Sauer**, International Relations Officer, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission, discussed food security within the context of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). For the CAP to be sustainable, it needs to ensure access, availability and acceptability of food and diets, while at the same time meeting the new challenges of climate change, territorial cohesion, and scarcity of natural resources.

18. The EU also promotes food security via its development policy and its engagement in international fora (*e.g.* the UN and G20). It is set out as one of five top challenges under the 2010-13 EU PCD Working Programme, and CAP reform proposals are accompanied by an impact assessment study on the effects on developing countries, which involves all Commission Services.

19. **Aaron Leopold**, Director, Environment and Sustainable Development, the Global Governance Institute, discussed the ongoing rush for land in Sub-Saharan Africa, biofuels and PCD.

20. The EU's biofuels policy may be playing a significant role in the rapid increase of land acquisitions seen in developing countries of late, and especially those in Sub-Saharan Africa where an area the size of France changed hands from 2008-10. New research concludes that up to 75% percent of land acquisitions are slated for biofuels production. These purchases or leases are often agreed under dubious conditions, offer questionably advantageous conditions for the purchasers/lessees, and many have been

associated with serious human rights questions related to treatment of vulnerable and marginalised groups, especially surrounding property rights, livelihoods, and access to water.

21. Leopold offered three main conclusions. Firstly, irrespective of what percentage of acquisitions are being carried out in the name of biofuels for Europe, the EU's Renewable Energy Directive (RED) played a key role in legitimating biofuels, and motivated countries and companies around the world to encourage increased biofuels production and consumption. This raised the question of what action the EU's PCD Framework dictates in cases where existing or new policies begin to do harm. Secondly, there is a serious need to incorporate social criteria/safeguards into policies directly impacting sensitive sectors in developing countries and to overcome WTO restrictions in this regard. Thirdly, to improve chances for PCD success, developing countries must be meaningfully brought into the policymaking process.

22. The **discussion** highlighted the role of political economy for policy change and the importance of having a concrete evidence-base. Focal points noted the timeliness of this meeting and welcomed collaboration between the OECD, the European Commission, and the European Parliament.

### **Session 2b: PCD and food security – ensuring an integrated approach to PCD**

23. This session, also chaired by **Ken Ash**, focused on the importance of evidence-based analysis and advice on the whole set of policies that might impact food security in developing countries (*e.g.* benefits of coherence and costs of incoherence). It looked at political, institutional and other constraints to effective implementation of a more coherent whole-of-government approach to food security.

24. **Alan Matthews**, Professor Emeritus of European Agricultural Policy at Trinity College Dublin, emphasised that developing countries are not necessarily all affected in the same way by OECD agricultural policies and/or fluctuations in world markets. For example, changes in food prices create both winners and losers between and within developing countries. Identifying more development-coherent policies in this situation means recognising the important role that prices play in allocating resources at a global level. Trade-distorting agricultural policies are incoherent because they depress world market prices and discourage food production in developing countries below its optimal level. Biofuel mandates are incoherent with development even if they raise global agricultural prices above market-determined levels because they send a misleading signal to developing countries and encourage a mistaken and potentially costly misallocation of resources. But sets of policies have important distributional impacts within developing countries, creating both winners and losers, but ultimately the coherence of these policies is judged by whether they distort the sensible allocation of resources in developing countries.

25. Non-agricultural OECD policies relevant to food security in developing countries include food safety, sanitary and phyto-sanitary (SPS), trade, environmental, renewable energy, climate change and research and innovation policies. Food safety and SPS measures, if abused, affect world market prices but also have a discriminatory effect as they are usually targeted against specific exporting countries. Trade policies clearly affect world prices, but also increasingly involve agreements on 'beyond the border' measures with specific countries or groups of countries. Environmental policies may limit agricultural production and hence influence world prices, but can also impact on developing countries through influencing the global stock of biodiversity. Renewable energy policies may also limit food production and hence world prices, but will also affect developing countries through their influence on fossil fuel prices. Climate change policies may limit agricultural production or influence consumption patterns and hence the level of world prices, but by influencing the stock of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere they also affect yield levels in developing countries. Policies towards agricultural research and the use of innovations (for example, biotechnology) also have the potential to influence OECD agricultural production levels and hence world market prices, but may also increase the shelf of technologies available to developing countries and hence their yield potential in the longer-run.

26. Simply adding up the winners and losers from a particular OECD country policy can provide a first indication to determine if that policy is coherent with the development objective of reducing poverty or not. But it cannot be the sole factor taken into account. Hence, evaluating the coherence of OECD policies for food security should focus more on their implications for the framework of global rules rather than a mechanical calculation on their impacts on developing countries. Developing countries have the main responsibility to provide the appropriate incentives and to make the necessary investments to improve their food security, but their decisions will be influenced by the global framework and rules environment. Greater predictability and stability in global rules to allow developing countries to take advantage of the gains from trade and ensuring that these rules are consistent with efforts to improve food security should be key metrics for the measurement of PCD.

27. **Steve Wiggins**, Research Fellow, Overseas Development Institute, reviewed the issues that have arisen for food security and nutrition (FSN) after the 2007/08 price spike and argued for a more proactive and inclusive approach to PCD. Such an approach needs to promote:

- Poverty reduction;
- Increased food production;
- Small-holder development;
- Improved health outcomes;
- Clean water; and
- Sanitation.

28. He also noted the importance of keeping girls in school and that child malnutrition can provide a good measure of food insecurity.

29. **Laust Gregersen**, Policy Officer, CONCORD Denmark, focused his intervention on the role of CSOs and a rights-based approach to PCD and food security in an EU context.

30. EU policy making is complex and subject to many vested and conflicting interests. The commitment to PCD acknowledges these conflicts and can act as an incentive to address the interests of all stakeholders. PCD promotes *transparency and participative policy making* that opens up not only to European but also to affected stakeholders in third countries, including those without voice or marginal to the centre of policy making.

31. The PCD process is a practical way of increasing knowledge and insights concerning intended or unintended policy impacts. PCD can encourage EU institutions to engage in a more open policy process, inviting critical voices and examining new policy options instead of discarding them quickly. It could invite anecdotal and empirical evidence and qualitative data from the ground that may not fit current models used or meet requirement for quantitative, indicators or ways of measurement.

32. The primary objective would not be to align and harmonise policies but rather to design policies in a way that promotes learning and accountability and becomes an institution of exchange. Accounting for PCD also contributes to improving *“responsive governance”*. Monitoring needs to become more of a multi-disciplinary approach that includes findings from different policy frameworks and qualitative approaches to assess impact. The challenge is to accept non-causal and non-linear impacts and to allow for evidence-based analysis that take account of the interconnectedness of policies and actors as well as the responses and interactions of people on the ground. Moreover, PCD introduces *accountability* not only on policy making but also on policy impact.

33. PCD stands on the founding principles of the EU; freedom, democracy and solidarity. A *Human Rights Based Approach* (HRBA) to development policy and any EU internal or external policy likely to affect developing countries requires a focus on the protection of the human rights of the poor and most marginalised people in society. Without addressing the obstacles to the realisation of rights we will never progress towards a sustained eradication of poverty.

34. The **discussion** confirmed that interest in PCD remains high, but also that the current evidence-base is too sectoral. Moreover, we need to look at how the external environment has changed over time in order to promote PCD more effectively. The role of the private sector could also be explored.

### **Session 3: Institutional mechanisms to promote PCD**

35. **Brian Atwood**, Chair of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), chaired this session and underlined that more political weight needs to be given to PCD, and that development ministries cannot deal with this issue alone. More resources need to be spent on collecting evidence and on development education.

36. **Karen Jorgensen**, Head of the OECD Review, Evaluation and Engagement Division, presented the main findings from peer reviews on institutional mechanisms for PCD. Peer reviews look at the three building blocks identified in the *Council Recommendation on good institutional practices for PCD*: (i) political commitment, (ii) co-ordination mechanisms, and (iii) monitoring, analysis and reporting. Peer reviews do not make impact assessments or thematic analyses of different areas.

37. There is a growing support to and awareness of PCD that does not always translate into clear action plans with priorities, or a clear understanding by all ministries of what PCD is and what its implications are. The number of co-ordination mechanisms has also increased, but their mandates are not necessarily clear and they may not be fully operational in producing useful information for decision-making. Finally, there is insufficient capacity for monitoring, analysis and reporting to produce and process information, and to make sure it feeds into the decision-making process. Those elements are necessary to produce the essential missing ingredient: political will to make decisions happen.

38. The three building blocks are thus necessary but not sufficient institutional mechanisms to translate into PCD-friendly policy-making. They are a necessary foundation on which to build efficient decision-making and increased dialogue with partner countries. In future peer reviews, there will be a need to keep a watching brief on political commitment; look at what has driven PCD in countries rather than only at institutional set-ups; and pay more attention to analytical capacity, monitoring and reporting.

39. During the **discussion** that followed, national focal points described their national set-ups, showing that no one size fits all. Many delegates underlined that peer reviews have helped increase awareness about PCD and drive the national agendas forward on the subject. They also said that political will and buy-in at the highest level are crucial, and insisted on the need to include partner countries in the dialogue about PCD, as well as civil society. Several focal points underlined the importance of evidence-based policies and the important role that the OECD can play in helping to gather such evidence, in producing analysis, impact assessments and providing examples of win-win policies that could be used to convince decision-makers, and also to raise awareness with the media. The idea of an OECD forum on best practices was raised and more frequent meetings among focal points were requested to focus on a few selected themes.

### **Session 3: Impact assessment and monitoring of PCD**

40. This session, which was chaired by **Zdenka Dobiasova**, Policy Analyst, DG Development and Cooperation – Europe Aid, European Commission, looked at how PCD impact assessments can be

conducted in practice. It also considered potential indicators for measuring PCD and discussed how to ensure that policies are “PCD-proofed” to the extent possible.

41. **Suzan Cornelissen**, Policy Officer at the Evert Vermeer Foundation (EVF), presented the work the EVF has been executing as part of its “Fair Politics” project. This project focuses on enhancing PCD within Dutch and European policies by bringing policy analysis of incoherent policies to the attention of policy makers. In order to back up these policy analyses, two impact studies were conducted by the EVF in Ghana and Rwanda. More “evidence based PCD” is essential in order to find out whether the perceived policy incoherence is also traceable on the ground in these developing countries; to what extent do organisations and local authorities share similar concerns; and to what extent can we trace back the actual impact of European policies on the ground?

42. The impact study in Ghana addresses the Economic Partnership Agreements of the EU, the case of illegal logging and the implementation of the Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT), and the issue of migration and brain drain. In Rwanda the impact study focused on how the EU’s raw materials strategy can have an impact on a country like Rwanda in terms of local development.

43. The two impact studies took on different approaches: the one in Ghana focused on existing policies and how these can be made more coherent to development goals, whereas the impact study in Rwanda was conducted at a time when the EU is still developing its policy on importing raw materials from developing countries. The main challenges in conducting the impact studies were the lack of awareness around the concept of PCD, the difficulty in proving a causal relationship between policy and impact, the lack of clear data available, and the difference between coherence on paper and in practice in terms of policy implementation.

44. **Niels Keijzer**, Deputy Programme Manager of the Strengthening European External Action programme at the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)) gave a short presentation based on his organisation's past engagement and research experience in relation to PCD. As an introduction he referred to a joint-evaluation of PCD mechanisms led by France in 2007. In the absence of a clearly stated view of what kind of impact is realistic to seek to achieve, it will be hard to formulate clear result-oriented action plans. There is also a need to measure progress towards PCD more effectively and this will require more resources.

45. A key challenge for measuring progress towards OECD members' PCD commitments is the absence of concrete objectives, given that the existing objectives are all process-oriented (*e.g.* 'taking into account', 'creating mechanisms'). Better defining objectives for PCD can therefore create an improved basis for political accountability and for defining more specific targets and indicators to help assess progress. This would require research to explore the actual effects of OECD policies in developing countries, as well as greater consensus on the definition and operationalisation of development objectives (*e.g.* income poverty versus a multidimensional understanding of poverty).

46. The **discussion** aimed to identify more satisfactory ways to measure PCD:

- Sweden noted that when quantitative data is lacking, it can be helpful to use qualitative assessment instead.
- Ireland shared its experience with identifying and using indicators (Ireland has 52 indicators across 8 policy areas).
- The Netherlands discussed the possibility and choice to use existing indicators and the practical difficulties with the ambiguity of development policy objectives when using them for PCD assessments.

- Another issue is the challenge to measure/demonstrate the added value of PCD, for example in terms of better protection of human rights.
- The timing of the measurement matters too – a good timing is important so that the data produced is used to, for example, feed into ex ante impact assessments on policies or into evaluations when a policy is being reviewed.
- Finally, the question of who is conducting the assessment is key. There are limits to self-assessment, while there can also be frustrations on the side of tentative external assessors (*e.g.* NGOs) as expectations are not explicit, there is a lack of information on how the comments and recommendations are used, as well as credibility questions about the credibility of their analysis.

47. For all issues on measurement, clarifying the objectives/goals/targets and setting a clear baseline should be the priority before moving on. Moreover, a mix between self-assessment and external independent assessment is necessary to build up knowledge on the issues. Knowledge sharing, identifying good practices and creating an accessible library of these issues can lead to large economies of scale and contribute to a division of labour. The International Platform for Knowledge sharing on Policy Coherence for Development ('the PCD Platform') launched last autumn by the OECD can be instrumental in making this possible.

#### **Session 4: Going forward – next steps**

48. This session was chaired by **Ebba Dohlman**, OECD Senior Advisor on PCD.

49. **Carina Lindberg**, Policy Analyst, OECD, introduced the PCD Platform that was officially launched in November 2011, and explained some of its main features. The Platform performs three tasks: it serves as a repository for documents on PCD (organised around the four pillars of the OECD Development Strategy); it highlights and encourages discussions on a specific topic (*e.g.* trade, migration) each month; and it hosts online consultations on the OECD Development Strategy.

50. She encouraged participants to use the Platform for dissemination of best practices and lessons learned; analysis on the benefits of PCD and the costs of incoherence; and for raising awareness about PCD.

51. **Kaori Miyamoto**, Senior Policy Analyst, OECD, informed participants about the mapping exercise driven by the OECD-DAC to list incoherent policies hampering development. Rather than attempting a comprehensive inventory, the mapping suggests a few priority topics for an in-depth focus where DAC involvement could make a difference: *(i)* trade; *(ii)* investment; *(iii)* green growth; and *(iv)* finance. It has also been proposed to carry out a case study in 2013-14 in a particular developing country with a volunteer member or members.

52. The meeting was concluded by **Ebba Dohlman**, who summarised the discussions by highlighting seven key messages:

- *There is a strong demand for evidence of incoherent policies.* We have evidence at the OECD in a number of policy areas, but we need to do a better job of packaging it and articulating it as PCD so that it can be more useful in response to the specific needs of policy makers and stakeholders in capitals.
- *PCD continues to be an important tool and goal, but there is a risk of over-simplification.* With increasing globalisation, the impacts of any one country's policies may be small compared to the impacts of collective action. Similarly global challenges, such as the functioning of financial

markets, global food and energy insecurity and climate change, may be much bigger challenges to address.

- *Institutional mechanisms remain important but are not sufficient.* The three building blocks that are monitored through the DAC peer reviews are important for more coherent policy making but we need to do much more analysis of the policy dimension. We could do this in the DAC peer reviews by taking advantage of the field missions, but we also have many other thematic and country reviews at the OECD where we could explore the PCD dimensions.
- *Strengthening policy dialogue with developing countries will contribute to our evidence-base on PCD.* Discussions on PCD have so far mainly been carried out among donor countries in the context of their aid policies. They have not reflected sufficiently the views, evidence, and priorities expressed by developing countries themselves. This is an element we are trying to redress through our OECD Strategy on Development.
- *Move beyond “do no harm”.* PCD discussions often focus on the incoherencies. It may be equally important to try to identify the synergies and see where a collective response from countries can lead to positive outcomes, such as was done today in the sessions on food security.
- *Impact assessments continue to be a weak link in work on PCD.* We need improvements in our methodologies but the presentations also highlighted the frequent absence of clear objective-setting, which is a key starting point in any assessment.
- *PCD will be a core element of the OECD Strategy on Development.* The meeting and the focal points themselves provided a lot of good messages and insights that will be useful as we move forward in the elaboration and implementation of the Strategy.

53. Finally, in response to requests from participants, the OECD may try to organise these meetings more frequently, ideally once in the spring and once in the autumn.

## ANNEX: COMPILATION OF MEETING EVALUATIONS<sup>1</sup>

*Please rate the following (1-5; 1 = not so good, 5 = very good) and provide us with your comments:*

**1. Meeting expectations versus actual meeting**

Average rating = 4

Comments include: I expected a lot and got a lot; good subjects and conference facilities; good to combine with EU focal points meeting; possible to surprise and provoke participants more.

**2. Meeting format**

Average rating = 4.1

Comments include: Include emerging economies and non-EU/OECD countries in the panels; long day in the same format – possible to have smaller breakout sessions; good interaction between audience and panellists; too many speakers and not enough time for each; set-up was too “OECD-like”.

**3. Meeting frequency (annual)**

There is a preference to have these meetings twice a year.

**4. Thematic focus on food security**

Average rating = 4.3

Comments include: Very important topic; could have focused more on methodological and institutional aspects rather than sectoral policy specificities; we did not reach any conclusions or a programme of work.

**5. What other issues would you like to see discussed in more depth?**

Suggestions include: illicit financial flows; tax and development; green growth; PCD best practices; energy; environment; climate change; PCD indicators.

**6. Role of the OECD in promoting PCD; priority areas in the coming biennium?**

Comments include: Important role; the OECD is a “frontrunner” in promoting PCD; to provide evidence that foster political will; to facilitate exchange of information on methodology and instruments; to combine development issues with other themes/meetings at the OECD; to develop PCD indicators; information on the cost of incoherent policies, the OECD Strategy on Development offers an opportunity for PCD.

**7. Have there been inter-ministerial discussions about the OECD Development Strategy in your capital?**

Mixed replies; yes in some countries; no in some; and “not aware” in some.

**8. User-friendliness of the web-based PCD Platform**

Many have not used it yet, but says that it looks user-friendly.

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<sup>1</sup> Nine questionnaires were returned; this annex shows average rating and an overview of the comments received.